

Letter from Taizé

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LETTER
FROM

Prague

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Translated into thirty languages, the LETTER FROM PRAGUE¹ was written by Brother Roger to be lived out by each person in their own life. It will be reflected on during the

41 weeks
of intercontinental
meetings of
young people

which will be held in Taizé from 3 February to 17 November 1991. These meetings will bring together, week after week, young adults from thirty to seventy nations at a time. (Of course, young people are also welcome in Taizé between mid-November and the end of January.)

This letter was made public during the European meeting which brought together in Prague, for six days, from 28 December 1990 to 2 January 1991, 80,000 young adults from throughout Europe as well as from other continents.

Your eyes are astonished to discover young people, even in faraway lands, who have fallen prey to discouragement. Their lives are brought to a standstill as they lose a fine human hope.

But your eyes perceive as well multitudes of young people attentive to discern the meaning of their life. They dare to say to themselves: "Get going! Begin again! Leave discouragement behind! Leave hopelessness behind! Let your soul live!"

Where can such inner vitality be found? — It comes to life when, in faith, in a movement of trust, you live intensely in the present moment, God's today.

This dynamism is never acquired once and for all. At every stage of life, from childhood to old age, it involves the risk of setting out on the road time and time again. It enables you to pass through times of doubt when faith seems to fade away. Some 2,600 years ago, a believer of days gone by already realized that "God's plans for you are plans of peace and not of misfortune; God wants to give you a future and a hope."²

Living intensely each present day means letting Christ take hold of you. His words are so clear: "Today I would like to enter your home."³ Today, not tomorrow.

Who is he, this Christ who offers such vitality?

In order to make himself understood by human beings, God found no better way than coming to earth as one of the poor, as a humble man. He came through Christ Jesus. God would still be far away if Christ did not allow him to shine through clearly.⁴

A daily prayer

Bless us, Lord,
us and those whom
you have confided to us.
Keep us in the spirit
of the Beatitudes,
joy, simplicity, mercy.

¹ Since 1962, the Taizé Community has been present in Eastern Europe through many visits made in utter discretion. How would it have been possible to live in the West without going often to be with those who had great difficulty in leaving home? Now, large numbers of young adults from Eastern Europe are able to take part in the meetings in Taizé.

The meeting in Prague is the third European meeting in Eastern Europe, after those in Hungary (Pécs, 28 April to 1 May 1989) and Poland (Wrocław, 28 December 1989 to 2 January 1990).

The Letter from Prague has also been written for the gathering of young adults that will be held in the Philippines from 22 to 25 February 1991. Before and during this meeting, Brother Roger and a few of his brothers will live in a slum of Manila, sharing the living conditions of the most destitute.

² The prophet Jeremiah (29,11; see also 31,17).

³ Jesus spoke these words to Zacchaeus (Luke 19,5). He also says in the Gospel, "Don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt 6,34).

⁴ John 1,18

From the beginning, Christ was in God. Since the birth of humanity, he was a living Word.⁵ He came to earth to make the trusting of faith accessible.⁶ Risen from the dead, he makes his home within us; he dwells within us. And we discover that Christ's love is expressed first and foremost by his forgiveness and his continual presence.

Who is this Christ, Love of all loving? Could he be the one John the apostle refers to when he writes, "«Some-one» you do not know is in your midst"?⁷

He is the one who, risen from the dead, rejoices with us, today, tomorrow and always.⁸ In him, the wellsprings of jubilation never run dry.

He is the one who bears with us the great sorrows of life, the broken relationships...⁹ In his life on earth, Jesus, fully human, was deeply affected in his heart of hearts by the trials of others. He wept when someone he loved died.¹⁰

More accessible for one person, more hidden for another, we seem to hear him say, "Don't you realize that I am close beside you, and by the Holy Spirit I live in you? I shall never leave you. Never."

No matter how little we sense of the Holy Spirit, he is life for us. No matter how little we understand of the Gospel, it is light in our midst. No matter how little we grasp of the Eucharist, it is a living presence in us.¹¹

And when you were lingering far from Christ Jesus, he was already waiting for you with these Gospel words, "In you I have placed my joy."¹²

His astonishing presence is inner light. Even when it is a pale glimmer, it bursts suddenly into flame within. It remains the same even when you have the impression that you no longer know how to pray.

Will you turn to Christ and ask, "What do you want of me?"¹³

Prayer is sometimes so concrete. It is not easy for human words to express what lies in the depths of our being. But in a prayer of inner silence, we rest in him—body, soul and spirit. And springs of living water well up: love of his forgiveness, an irreplaceable goodness and also that inner harmony created by the Holy Spirit in us.

Humble prayer is able to heal the secret wound of the soul. And a breath of life rises up that will never die away...

5 John 1,1-4

6 Many believers are like the man in the Gospel who cried out to Jesus, "I do believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9,24). In order to believe, we do not depend just on our own faith but on the faith of the whole Church, and we can say this prayer: "O Christ, in the steps of the witnesses of all the ages, from the time of Mary and the apostles, enable me to dispose myself inwardly to place my trust in the Mystery of Faith." Many people can only be led into faith by advancing step by step. And the greater our thirst for God becomes, the more it wishes to know Christ.

7 John 1,26

8 If Christ were not risen, we would refer only to his life on earth, or to some of his words. But he is risen; he is present today, tomorrow and always. By his mysterious presence, he is united to every human being without exception. Stating that Christ is united to everyone does not mean, of course, that every human being is united to him by a life of communion. Christ looks for a personal response.

9 God never imposes himself. God leaves us free to love or not to love, to forgive or to reject forgiveness. But God is never a passive observer of the affliction of human beings. God suffers with the innocent, the victims of incomprehensible trials; God suffers with each and every person. There is a pain God experiences, a suffering felt by Christ.

10 Jesus wept when he heard of Lazarus' death and when he saw the grief of Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary (John 11,32-36).

11 For different reasons, some people find themselves in situations where they do not receive the Eucharist. For centuries and centuries, first in the Churches of the East, then in the West, there has been that admirable maternal gesture of the Church which is the gift of blessed bread. Although it is less common in some areas, it remains a valuable practice. Rather than becoming upset when, for some reason or another, it is impossible to receive communion, why not offer blessed bread? In that way, none of those who are present for the Eucharistic celebration, nobody at all, will be refused that sign of sharing, the blessed bread, which expresses the motherly love of the Church.

12 Since the beginning of the Church, when someone was baptized, these words that Christ heard at his own baptism (Mark 1,11) were addressed to the newly baptized person.

This reality had penetrated Saint Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833) to such an extent that he welcomed pilgrims with the words, "My joy! Christ is risen!"

13 Christ Jesus speaks the same words to each of us: "Follow me!" Who would reply to Christ: I'll follow you later; I have other things to do right now? Why refuse to respond to him at once? "Jesus said to Peter and to Andrew: Come, follow me... And at once, leaving their nets, they followed him" (Mark 1,17-18).

14 Matt 11,25

15 Matt 5,1-12

16 Gen 1,26-27

17 Far from being wedded to songs and forms of expression that exude boredom, it is essential that common prayer in churches give people a glimpse of the adorable presence of the Risen Lord. The whole spiritual life of a parish or congregation can be constantly renewed when all take part in the mystery, especially by the beauty of the hymns and the singing. And when the songs are sung in the different languages of those present, the heart becomes more universal. It is so important that the young participate at least once a week in worship with all the generations. In that way they renew hope in older people.

Icons are another element that contributes to the beauty of prayer. They are like windows open on the realities of the Kingdom of God to make them present in our prayer here on earth. They are a call for our own transfiguration.

18 Saint Augustine, Confessions.

19 When our own darkness invites us to speak with it, what a risk of losing our balance! Then we enter into a dialogue, not with the Risen Christ, but with what hurts us both in ourselves and in others.

Our prayer does not require superhuman efforts. Like a soft sighing, like a child's prayer, it keeps us alert. Has not God revealed to those who are little, to Christ's poor, what the powerful of this world have so much trouble understanding?¹⁴

Who will tell all that a child can communicate by simplicity, by its trust, by a few words or a question so unexpected that they awaken to a communion in God?

At every age, in a person who is fully responsible, seasoned by inner struggles, a spirit of childhood, the spirit of the "Beatitudes",¹⁵ is like a fresh breeze of joy and wonder.

And a contemplative outlook sets you free from deadening routines. It allows you to perceive Gospel treasures in the humblest events, and to discover in the universe the radiant beauties of creation.

In the image of God,¹⁶ humans are creators too. A contemplative outlook enables us to admire what human beings create with their own hands, from childhood to death. There are artists' hands whose creations permit us to discern Gospel faces, so that a look is enough for us to catch sight of the mystery of God.

In the beauty of a common prayer, a veil is lifted on what, in faith, cannot be expressed in words, and this reality beyond words evokes our adoration. A mystical outlook sees in it reflections of heaven's joy on earth. It finds intuitions to go beyond the breakdowns of communion and to move toward reconciliations.¹⁷

Christ Jesus, we never wish to choose darkness. Your light is Gospel. Your presence is compassion.

"Jesus, light of my heart, do not let my own darkness speak to me."¹⁸

When your own darkness calls out to you, his light always remains. It penetrates the furthest reaches of your night.¹⁹

Life has its trials whose reasons remain unknown. They can batter you, and then discouragement becomes one of your worst enemies. But before you there always lies this road leading upwards: to grow in God, with a view to a greater love. Keep on loving when those closest to you, your intimates, become remote and seem to be in another world. ▷

Stop: open the Gospel; you will be relieved to discover this assurance: "No one can add a single day to their life by worrying about it... I give you my peace... Do not let your heart be troubled or afraid."²⁰

Fears and anxieties are part of our human condition, immersed as we are in societies that are wounded and constantly shaken. Every human being, every believer, journeys, creates and suffers in these societies, which can lead to inner impulses of revolt, sometimes of hatred and of dominating others' minds.

Peace of heart is a spiritual reality that gives life in every situation, whereas anxiety and fear are able to undermine the trust of faith.

Pace of heart never means forgetting about others. It does not make us deaf to the call of human solidarities, which comes straight from the Gospel.²¹

On both hemispheres, who will open their eyes to the anguish of the innocent²²: children marked for life by lack of affection, by being abandoned by their loved ones; multitudes of elderly people experiencing unbearable loneliness?²³ Who will attempt to diminish suffering in places where living conditions are wretched?

In order to make the earth more welcoming and a better place to live, the vast possibilities of science and technology need to be put to use. They are able to alleviate sufferings, to bring an end to famines, to sustain, throughout the earth, the human family that is growing to unprecedented proportions.²⁴

Indispensable though they may be, these powerful means by themselves are not enough. If we were to wake up, one fine morning, in societies that were functional, highly technological, but where the trust of faith, the intelligence of the heart and a thirst for reconciliation had been extinguished, what then would be the future of the human family?

On all the continents, so many young people, women, men and also children have all they need for the healing of wounded situations.²⁵ Often, with almost no resources, the humble of the earth have prepared ways forward.

Some have risen up and, with their bare hands, have brought down walls of fears and humiliations. They knew that no one people is more guilty than another. And now they are trying to escape from the mistrust of the recent or distant past. It is so essential never to humiliate members of a nation some of whose leaders, in the course of history, have committed acts of terror.

20 Luke 12,25-26; John 14,27

21 In the Gospel, Christ says, "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do to me" (Matt 25,40).

22 "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men and women of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts... Throughout the course of the centuries, human beings have laboured to better the circumstances of their lives through a monumental amount of individual and collective effort... Such human activity accords with God's will... The Church serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family" (Gaudium et Spes).

23 Here are two suggestions in this respect:

When some children see their loved ones argue or separate, even if they are provided for materially, then the hearts of these children are wounded for life. If, each week, young people were to go to spend time with some of these children, they could listen to them, speak to them and bring them to a common prayer.

So many older people experience loneliness. Sometimes they think that they were nothing, that they accomplished nothing. And yet, there are elderly persons able to listen with detachment and to understand the questions of the young. They are often present in churches. Why not join them there?

24 Great scientific discoveries have two sides: they can be constructive or destructive. It all depends on the use to which they are put.

25 In order to heal wounded situations, a fairer distribution of the riches of the earth will always be one of the conditions for peace. But material sharing is not everything. Solidarity also involves a sharing of cultures.

With respect to the European continent, it is urgent to construct a "European family". Each of the nations of Europe needs to live in complementarity with the others. And, far from remaining turned in upon itself, Europe will always discover part of its own genius in solidarity with the nations of other continents.

The different parts of the world also need one another. They each lose a basic equilibrium when left to themselves, when they do not live in complementarity with other regions of the earth.

26 In each baptized person, the Holy Spirit places a smaller or greater portion of a "pastoral" gift. This gift makes us attentive to others, to prepare in them the ways of the Lord Christ. The life of Christ can be communicated in a great many ways—by praying for others, by welcoming them, by visiting them...

"Johannine hours" can be a way for a few people to deepen their search for God, even in the midst of an ordinary life. They begin by taking a few moments alone in silence to read a Bible text. Then a few people can meet together for a brief sharing about what each one has discovered.

27 See Matt 5,23-24

28 Why is it that so many Christians, although they profess faith in Christ, remain separated and even go to the point of tearing apart the communion of the Church?

Today, interest in the ecumenical vocation is not as strong as it was thirty years ago. When it keeps putting off reconciliation to a later date, the ecumenical vocation nourishes illusory hopes, and comes to a standstill on parallel roads between confessions.

Reconciliation is born within, in the heart of each person. For a half-century now, many have been made attentive to the words of Christ to be reconciled "without delay" (Matt 5,23-24). They are often young people who are innocent of the separations engendered by history (as, incidentally, are their elders). John XXIII had a powerful intuition about reconciliation when he said in January 1959, "We will not attempt to put history on trial; we will not attempt to find out who was wrong and who was right; we will say: let us be reconciled!"

The ecumenical vocation of baptized Christians consists first of all in being ferments of a reconciliation that is lived out without delay, every day, in the concrete circumstances of each person's life.

29 See 1 Cor 8,6 and Eph 1,10

30 John 3,17

31 "If I speak in God's name, have all knowledge and a faith that can move mountains, but have no love, I am nothing... These three remain: faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13,1.2.13)

32 A whole inner life can blossom even in a heart that is deeply afflicted. The Holy Spirit has the ability to gather together energies that are buried deep within. This is true for every human being; the most fragile have a reservoir of hidden energies.

And then we rediscover a new vitality. And in our depths, clear resolutions take shape... doing all we can to be, in our own situation, creators of trust and reconciliation... without waiting, finding concrete ways to bring about reconciliation between individuals, between Christians, between people of different backgrounds... disposing ourselves to give our lives in order to make the earth a place fit to live in, and to communicate to those around us a fine human hope... asking Christ Jesus "what do you want of me?" and listening to the words he addresses to each person: "You, follow me!"...

There are multitudes of people who have given the best of themselves to be a leaven of trust among individuals and peoples. They have risen up among human beings as signs of what we never dared hope for. They have been built up within by times of incomprehensible trial. They have persevered, come what may. So many of them have, by their lives, come close to the holiness of Christ.

Will you, too, come to the point of giving yourself in this way? Will you hear the call that Jesus, the Christ, addresses to each person, "You, follow me"?

You are not unaware that vast regions of the world are desert wastelands of faith. Will you be among those who open up ways of communion, ways of easing tensions and of reconciliations? Be confident; everyone receives the gifts for this. And the gifts of the Holy Spirit will never run out.²⁶ Is there a clearer light than a life devoted to reconciliations?

Who would wish to trample on this call from Christ Jesus: "Without waiting, go and be reconciled?"²⁷

For the Gospel, reconciliation is never lazy; it is immediate. It does not spend its time imputing bad intentions to others. It is attentive never to dramatize situations. It never wastes time trying to find out who was wrong and who was right; nothing paralyzes creative abilities as much as that.²⁸

Will you create ways of trust and reconciliation in the human family, and also in that unique communion which is the Body of Christ, his Church? Christ did not come to start one more religion, but to offer a fullness of communion in himself, the Risen Lord. In the heart of Christ, this communion is as wide as the immensity of the universe.²⁹ In it we discover this marvel: love of his presence, love of his forgiveness.

*Jesus Christ, inner Light, you came not to judge the world but so that, through you, every human being might be saved and forgiven.*³⁰

Even if we had the gift of speaking in God's name, even if we had enough faith to move mountains, if we have no love, it is useless.³¹

And when love that reconciles becomes a fire within you, then the heart, even when afflicted,³² can begin to live anew. As a creator of reconciliation and of trust, are you aware that you can open incalculable perspectives for the future of the human community? □

Messages of the European Meeting in Prague

Pope John Paul II:

Informed of the next stage of the "pilgrimage of trust on earth" bringing together many European young people in Prague from 28 December to 2 January, the Holy Father addresses to all the participants his most cordial greetings. He encourages the young people from all the countries of Europe to deepen their unity as brothers and sisters, in prayer and in reflection on the topic "inner life and human solidarities". They will discover together what the Christian sources provide in terms of inspiration, strength and hope to bring them fulfilment as persons, to unite the Christian community, to develop solidarity between the nations of Europe, without forgetting the necessary mutual assistance between peoples of the North and the South. At a time when contacts between young people across the whole European continent are growing more intense, the Pope thanks the brothers of Taizé for their initiative and wishes that the meeting in Prague may bear much fruit. With all his heart he invokes the Lord born among us, the Prince of peace, the Redeemer of the world, asking Him to assist the young and their hosts and to pour down upon all the benefits of the divine blessing.

Patriarch Dimitrios, of Constantinople,

assures the young people from throughout Europe together in Prague that he is praying for them and for their gathering.

On this occasion, he desires particularly to mention what Taizé is undertaking to help the young come closer to Christ, and to awaken in them a sense of their responsibility to bring about brotherhood, sharing and friendship between churches, between individuals and between the peoples of the earth.

He calls down upon them the grace of God and His infinite compassion.

The **Secretary General of the United Nations, J. Perez de Cuellar**, said in a telephone message from New York that, as in past years, he was united in spirit with the young people at the European meeting in Prague, and that he counted on their prayers for him and for the United Nations.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie:

I send my warmest greetings and the assurance of my prayers for the Taizé European Meeting for Youth in Prague.

My memory of the 1986 Meeting in London remains vivid. I recall the joy, simplicity and beauty of the worship which united thousands of young people from countries then separated by political ideology. Now Europe has opened up. Barriers of all kinds have crumbled. Our task today is to build trust in the European family and to enlarge our sympathies to include places elsewhere in the world where poverty and injustice still oppress God's people.

Taizé's beacon of light and hope in a divided world has always drawn young people. At the heart of its message has been that the life of prayer and worship widens our horizons of human caring by drawing us further into the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ, the Man for Others.

May God bless you all and prosper your time together, and may you bring His hope and encouragement to the people of Prague.

A year of reconciliation

During the Prague Meeting, Brother Roger announced the following project:

"For Christians, there is a hierarchy in the things which are urgent. One of the priorities today is what leads to reconciliation. Not in order to be stronger than other people but so as to be consistent with the Christ who is Love of all loving.

Moreover, the world is being shaken. Europe, is going through a period of disturbance but also of reconstruction. We cannot run away from our responsibilities in view of building a Europe that is pacified, free and reconciled.

Seeking for reconciliation implies a struggle inside ourselves. It is no easy way. It is not a naive trust which does not want to see those who are abusing other people's trust.

We are going to take one year in order to enter into the vocation of reconciliation and give it concrete expression. Thus we shall make the coming year, from Easter 1991 to Easter 1992, A YEAR OF RECONCILIATION."

In Taizé this Easter, 31 March 1991, suggestions will be offered for the coming year. □

Message from President Vaclav Havel

When I heard the news that 80,000 young people were going to bring the message of Taizé to Prague, a message of love and of peace, I was very moved indeed.

In this way, following Paris, Rome, London, Barcelona, Wrocław, and other cities, our capital finds its place once again in the spiritual fabric woven by the cities, with their cathedrals, their inhabitants and the common faith linking them together. This fabric, subtle and strong at the same time, goes to make up Europe.

The present time of profound upheaval is leading us to a complete change in our life, including the spiritual; it is pushing us to seek the true meaning of life, without fearing the sacrifices which that demands. And it is at this precise moment that "the pilgrimage of trust on earth" comes to help us to seek and to find the wellsprings of faith and the new spiritual values, lost through the long years of the totalitarian regime.

I am extremely happy that, on Brother Roger's initiative and with Cardinal Tomasek's support, you have come to Prague with this aim.

I deeply regret that I am not able to take part personally in your prayers and in your times of reflexion, even more so as they are centred on values which are so close to my own.

Be quite sure that I shall be spiritually present with you all through your meeting in Prague. Your prayers will give momentum to all people of good will and will reinforce our trust in the solidarity among human beings that is so necessary along the way of reconciliation which must one day lead us to the Europe so wished for, bringing together women and men who are united, happy and fraternal.

Meditating on the word

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

1 Fri Mt 21.33-39, 42-43 • **Mi 7.14-16**

The flock you chose, Lord, lives confined in a forest with meadow land all around: shepherd your people and lead them to pasture.

2 Sat Mt 18.19-22 • **Mi 7.18-20**

What God can compare with you, Lord, for pardoning sin and overlooking transgression? You will again have compassion on us, treading our sins underfoot.

3 SUN 1 Co 1.22-25 • **Jn 4.5-14**

Jesus said: Anyone who drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. The water I give them will become a spring of water within them, welling up to eternal life.

4 Mon Jn 4.14-26 • **Jr 29.11-14**

The plans I have for you, says the Lord, are plans for peace not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. When you seek me, you shall find me, for you will seek me with all your heart.

5 Tue Jn 4.27-42 • **Dn 3.37-43**

We now put all our heart into following you, God, and seeking your face. Rescue us in accordance with your wonderful deeds.

6 Wed Jn 4.43-54 • **Hos 6.1-6**

Let us strive to know the Lord; that he will come is as certain as the dawn. He will come to us like the rain of springtime upon the earth.

7 Thu Lk 11.14-20 • **Jr 7.23-26a**

The Lord says: Listen to my voice, then I will be your God and you will be my people. In everything, follow the way that I will mark out for your happiness.

8 Fri Hos 14.2-5a • **Mk 12.28-34**

Jesus said: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. Love your neighbour as yourself. These are the two greatest commandments.

9 Sat Lk 4.5-7 • **Lk 18.9-14**

In a parable, Jesus said that the one who prayed saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner", went home forgiven.

10 SUN Ep 2.4-10 • **Jn 9.1-12**

Jesus said to his disciples: We must do the work of the one who sent me, while the daylight lasts. The night is coming, no one can work then. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

11 Mon Jn 9.13-17 • **Is 65.17-19**

The Lord says: See, I am going to create new heavens and a new earth. Be filled with rejoicing for ever, for I am creating my people to be gladness.

12 Tue Jn 9.18-25 • **Jr 20.7-9**

Jeremiah said: The word of the Lord has brought insult and derision upon me. And so I said to myself, "I shall not think about him, I shall no longer speak in his name." But there seemed to be a burning fire in my heart, which I could not contain.

13 Wed Jn 9.35-39 • **Is 49.8-10**

The Lord says: My people will not go hungry or thirsty, they will not be scorched by the heat of the desert, for the one who has compassion on them will be with them, guiding them to springs of water.

14 Thu Jn 5.31-38 • **Jr 12.1-3a**

Jeremiah said: You know me, Lord, and you see me. You know that my heart is with you.

15 Fri Ws 2.1a, 12-20 • **Jn 7.1-18**

Jesus said: My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. If anyone is prepared to do God's will they will discover whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

16 Sat Jr 31.31-34 • **Jn 7.25-30, 40-53**

Jesus said: I am not here on my own, but the one who sent me is true. I know him because I am from him and he sent me.

17 SUN Heb 5.7-9 • **Jn 11.1-45**

Jesus said to Martha: I am the resurrection. The one who believes in me shall live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

18 Mon Jn 8.1-11 • **Is 42.1-4**

The Lord says: My servant does not cry out or raise his voice. Faithfully he will present what is just; he will not falter or be discouraged until he has established justice on the earth.

19 Tue Jn 8.25-30 • **Ws 10.10**

St JOSEPH The Wisdom of God led the upright along straight paths and showed them the realities of the kingdom of God.

20 Wed Jn 8.31-36 • **Is 49.1-6**

I thought, "My toil has been futile, I have worn myself out for nothing." Yet all the while my cause was with the Lord and my reward with my God.

March

21 Thu Jn 10.31-39 • **Is 50.8-10**

Who among you reveres the Lord and listens to his servant's voice? Who among you walks in darkness and sees no light? Trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon your God.

22 Fri Jn 11.49-54 • **Is 53.1-5**

The servant of the Lord bore our suffering. We have been healed by his wounds.

23 Sat Jn 6.60-69 • **Ezk 37.26-28**

The Lord says: I shall make a covenant of peace with my people, and it will be an eternal covenant. I shall set my sanctuary among them for ever.

24 SUN Is 50.4-7 • **Mk 11.1-10**

PALM SUNDAY Jesus entered Jerusalem, and those who walked in front and those who followed shouted: Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the Kingdom that is coming!

25 Mon Mt 26.47-56 • **Mt 26.30-46**

Jesus prayed: My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Yet not as I will, but as you will.

26 Tue Mk 14.66-72 • **Mk 14.32-65**

At Gethsemane, Jesus prayed saying: Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will.

27 Wed Lk 23.1-12 • **Lk 23.26-46**

On the cross, Jesus said: Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.

28 Thu Lk 22.7-23 • **Jn 13.1-15** • **1 Co 11.23-26**

Paul writes: I received from the Lord what I passed on to you. Whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord, you are proclaiming his death until he comes.

29 Fri Jn 18.28-40 • **Jn 19.1-37**

GOOD FRIDAY On the cross, Jesus said, "It is fulfilled", and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.

30 Sat Jb 19.25-26 • **Mt 27.62-66** • **1 P 3.18-22**

Christ was put to death in the body and raised to life in the Spirit. And in the Spirit he also went to announce the Gospel to those who once had refused to believe.

31 SUN Col 3.1-4 • **Lk 24.13-32** • **Jn 20.1-18**

EASTER DAY The Risen Christ said to Mary of Magdala: Go and find my brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

Johannine Hours

Ezekiel 37, 1-14

Johannine hours are suggested as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer, in the midst of our life at home. During the course of the day take a couple of hours to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow.

Afterwards, the group (3 to 10 people) meet together to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

At a very difficult time for God's people, when the nation is destroyed and its rulers in exile far from home, a prophet has a vision that reveals God's identity and his desires for those he loves. He sees a valley filled with human bones lying on the ground. And then, when the prophet begins to proclaim the word of God to these dry bones, all at once they start to come together. The breath of life enters them and they turn into a great multitude of living human beings.

Through this vision, God reveals himself to his people as the source of their life and the motive force of their history. Discouraged, the faithful had thought they had no future and no hope. They felt like the living dead. But no, says the prophet: God, Creator of the world and Ruler of history, is able to bring life even in places where there is only death and despair. By the Spirit, God's own breath of life, we shall be able to set out again with new vitality. In this way, God shows his identity: the God who gives life in order to display his great mercy.

● How does this passage help us understand in what God's power consists and its link to his love? Are there periods in our life when we are like "dry bones"?

What does this text have to say to us then? How does God's word come to us in order to transform our life, to give us new vitality?

Meditating on the word

April

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

Johannine
Hours
Revelation 3,20

1 Mon Ac 2.14-28 • **Lk 24.33-48**
The Risen Christ stood among his disciples and said: Peace be with you!

2 Tue Ac 2.36-41 • **Mt 28.1-20**
The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid: I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen as he said he would."

3 Wed Ac 3.1-10 • **Jn 20.19-23**
The Risen Christ said to the disciples: Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.

4 Thu Ac 3.11-21 • **Jn 21.4-14** • **Rv 1.5**
Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the First-born from among the dead. He loves us and has washed away our sins.

5 Fri Mk 16.1-8 • **Ac 4.1-12**
Christ, the stone the builders rejected, has become the cornerstone.

6 Sat Lk 24.1-12 • **Ac 4.13-21**
When the Sanhedrin forbade them to speak in the name of Jesus, Peter and John replied, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

7 SUN Ac 4.32-35 • **Jn 20.24-31**
Jesus said to Thomas: You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

8 Mon Ac 2.42-47 • **Jn 3.1-8**
Jesus said: What is born of the Spirit is spirit. The wind blows where it pleases; you hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with those who are born of the Spirit.

9 Tue Jn 3.7-15 • **Ac 5.27-33**
God has raised Jesus from the dead and placed him at his right hand to be Leader and Saviour, and to give repentance and forgiveness of sins through him.

10 Wed Ac 5.34-42 • **Jn 3.16-21**
God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but so that the world might be saved through him.

11 Thu Jn 3.31-36a • **Ac 7.51-8.1a**
As they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And with these words he fell asleep.

12 Fri Jn 6.1-15 • **Ac 8.1-8**
The believers who had been scattered during the persecution went from place to place proclaiming the good news of the Gospel.

13 Sat Ac 9.1-22 • **Jn 20.1-9**
When Jesus' disciple entered the empty tomb, he saw and believed.

14 SUN Ac 3.13-19 • **Lk 24.35-48**
The Risen Christ said to the apostles: This is what is written: The Christ will suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day. And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations.

15 Mon 1 P 1.1-5 • **Jn 6.22-29**
Jesus said: Do not work for food that spoils, but for the food that endures for eternal life.

16 Tue Jn 6.30-35 • **1 P 1.6-9**
Though you have not seen Christ Jesus, you love him.

17 Wed 1 P 1.10-12 • **Jn 6.35-40**
Jesus said: The will of the one who sent me is that I should lose nothing of all he has given me, but that I should raise it up on the last day.

18 Thu Jn 6.44-51 • **1 P 1.13-16**
Put all your hope in the grace brought to you by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

19 Fri 1 P 1.18-21 • **Jn 6.60-69**
Jesus said: The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

20 Sat Mt 28.1-10 • **1 P 1.22-25**
By your obedience to the truth, you have purified yourselves so that you have sincere love for one another. Love each other deeply and from the heart.

21 SUN Ac 4.8-12 • **Jn 10.11-18**
Jesus said: I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

22 Mon 1 Co 15.1-8 • **Jn 10.1-10**
Jesus said: I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: they will go in and out, and will find pasture.

23 Tue Jn 10.22-30 • **1 Co 15.20-28**
Christ has been raised from the dead as the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Just all die in Adam, so in Christ all will be brought to life.

24 Wed Jn 12.20-26 • **1 Co 15.44-49**
Paul writes: As we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the heavenly one.

25 Thu Mk 16.15-20 • **1 P 5.5b-11**
St MARK Peter writes: Cast all your anxiety on God because he cares for you. Resist the tempter, standing firm in faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering.

26 Fri 1 Co 15.50-53 • **Jn 13.31-35**
Jesus said: It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognize you as my disciples.

27 Sat Mk 16.9-18 • **1 Co 15.54-58**
Stand firm, let nothing shake you, be full of energy for the work of God, knowing that in the Lord nothing of your labour is wasted.

28 SUN Ac 9.26-31 • **Jn 15.1-8**
Jesus said: Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

29 Mon Ac 11.3,15-18 • **Jn 14.1-12**
Jesus said: There are many rooms in my Father's house.

30 Tue Jn 14.12-16 • **Ac 11.19-21**
The Lord helped those who were proclaiming the good news, and a great number of people believed and turned to God.

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him, and he with me."

The Christ of the Apocalypse sums up the Gospel message in some simple but fundamental words. From the beginning, God has been looking for human beings in order to enter into a relationship with us. At the same time, God never imposes himself or forces us to respond. And through Christ, God knocks, like a poor man, at the door of every human heart.

In the Bible, eating together is a sign of communion, of a shared life. This communion becomes a reality for those who open their door to Christ (cf. John 14.23). Our faith does not require us to do great things, but simply to discern God's call and to respond by a movement of welcome, of inner openness. And this simple act is, in fact, everything: like the response of Mary (Luke 1.26-38), it enables God to enter the world through our own existence.

● In the midst of the noises of the world, how can we discern the voice of Christ who stands at our door? How can we open our door to Christ? What concrete steps or attitudes towards others follow from this inner movement by which we welcome Christ?

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